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UNCLAS KINGSTON 000755

SIPDIS

WHA/CAR (BENT), INL/LP (BROWN), SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD AND J7
(RHANNAN), S/CT AND IO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [JM](#)

SUBJECT: TERRORISM PREVENTION ACT PASSES IN THE LOWER HOUSE

REF: A. KINGSTON 03374

[B](#). KINGSTON 03389

[C](#). SECSTATE 269653

[1](#)1. After a five-hour, heated debate on the Terrorism Prevention Act in Parliament on March 15, the GOJ secured the support of the Opposition and the act was passed in the lower house that evening. The debate commenced with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade K.D. Knight spending over an hour defending provisions of the bill. Delroy Chuck, Opposition spokesperson on justice issues, responded forcefully on issues that centered on the definition of terrorism and terrorist activity.

[1](#)2. Based on recommendations in the Opposition's Minority Report (Ref A), the GOJ agreed to the definition of terrorism as "extreme acts of violence that causes death, serious bodily harm, endangers life and calculated to cause substantial property damage." A clause was added which will allow the legislation to be reviewed by a joint select committee of parliament after two years. The parties also agreed to life imprisonment as the maximum penalty for terrorism related offenses.

[1](#)3. Both sides agreed that they wanted to comply with UNSCR 1373 and Prime Minister P.J. Patterson stressed that no Jamaican government has ever reneged on its international treaty obligations. FM Knight added that the passage of this legislation would allow Jamaica to enter into the eight remaining counterterrorism conventions.

[1](#)4. Michelle Walker, Head of the Legal Unit at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade (MFAFT) told Poloff that the Ministry is pleased with the outcome; however, as contentious as the debate was last night, this legislation must still pass the Senate, thus "the fight is not yet over."

[1](#)5. Post will continue to monitor and report on the status of this legislation and the pending ratification of the remaining counterterrorism conventions.

TIGHE